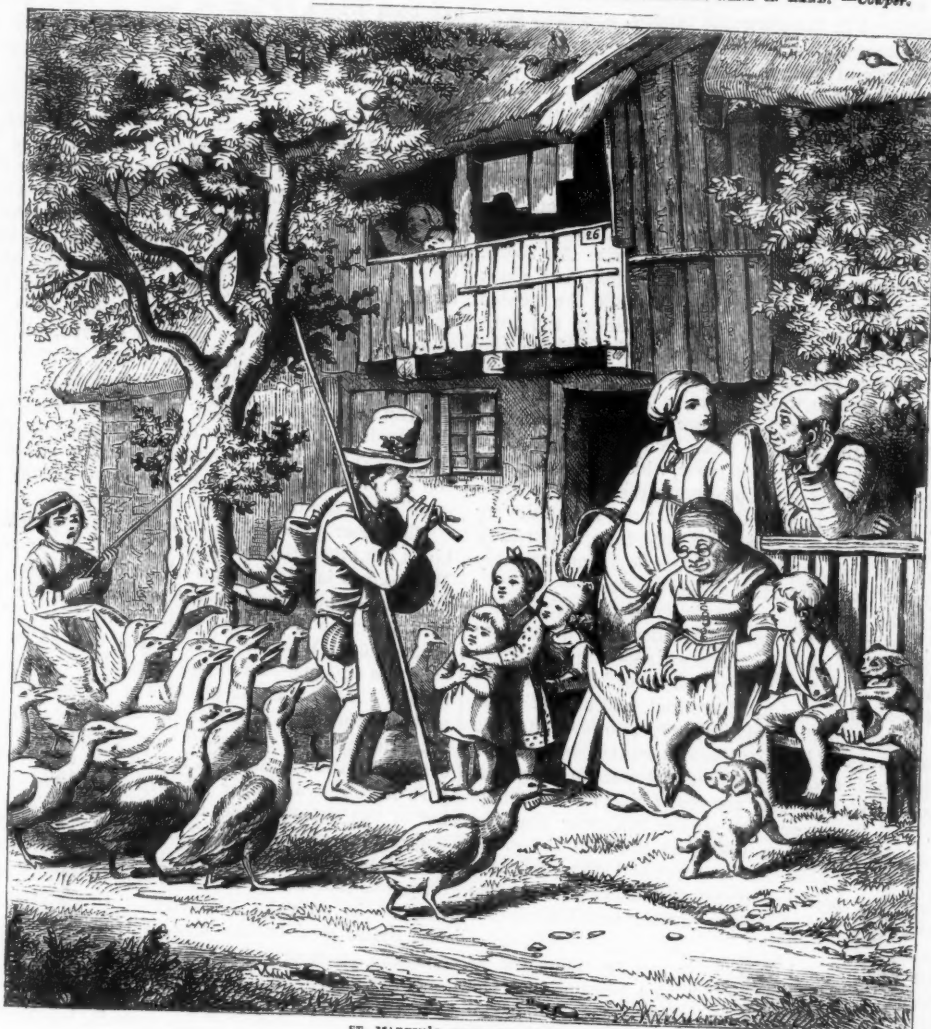


THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—Cowper.



ST. MARTIN'S GERMAN GEESSE.

Richter, painter.

NOTES ON MICHAELMAS TIME.

THE transition time of Michaelmas comes upon us with a much varying aspect, rather pensive and suggestive of sadness upon the whole, albeit not wanting in abundant cause for cheerfulness and gratitude. The equinoctial gales are now blowing or about to blow; and we know that the boisterous winds, as they roar and whine and whistle around our dwellings, are wafting away from us the last lingering delight and amenities of summer, while grey-bearded autumn drags along old white-haired winter in his train. The days are now rapidly

on the wane, and grow visibly shorter with each setting sun; the early mornings are bleak and frore, and the lengthening evenings are cold and chill; and we button up our coats in returning from our evening walks, and are not sorry to come in out of the gusty air, and make ourselves comfortable in the curtained parlour by the fire-side as the night settles down. Still the mid-days are delightful, and the air of the hills and high level downs is beyond measure grateful and bracing to both body and mind. The landscape on all sides is clad in rich and varied colour; the second growth of the low-lying meadows contrasts its deep green with the pale

brown of the stubble fields and the dark hue of the bare soil, here and there turned up by the plough in preparation for the sowing of next year's wheat; the wooded hills show every shade of colour, from palest yellow to deepest brown, and are spotted over with patches of orange and red and purple and grey. But all the splendid colours of earth are at times infinitely outdone by the matchless exhibitions of the autumnal sunsets: often of an evening the whole sky seems ablaze, from the western horizon to the zenith; the azure of the heavens changes to a delicate rose tint, melting into blue in the loftier region, while overhead a thousand crimson draperies stretch along in wildly fantastic shapes, which for a few brief minutes combine in one gorgeous canopy, and then fade away and disappear.

The agricultural year is now supposed to have come to a close, the harvests being all gathered in; unless it be the potato harvest, which the labourers are now busy in digging up and storing away in pits impenetrable to frost, and the apple harvest, the mellow burden of which glows brightly in the orchards. A merry harvest is this latter, where the crop happens to be good; and the gathering it is more a pastime than a toil, judging from the frolic and gaiety that characterize the scene, when the men and lads run up the ladders and pluck the fruit from the topmost boughs, while the women and lasses strip the lower branches, loading the fruit in their aprons. In the cider counties, where the orchards cover hundreds of acres, you may sometimes at this season walk for miles over ground lying half buried in apples, which are left for a time to get touched by the friendly frost before being crushed in the cider-mill. Another harvest, which in some places is not yet finished, is the hop harvest, the final processes of which just now, however, consist more in the drying and packing into the monster pockets than in plucking from the bines; which picturesque employment is mostly ended by the time that Michaelmas arrives.

The hazel-nuts are now at their ripest, though, unfortunately, the copses are usually rifled and stripped bare long before this time by boys and girls too eager to wait; but those who find them now gather them in perfection—brown, slip-shelled, and full flavoured, and almost rivaling the filbert in bulk. Nutting parties, however, have to make short work of it, to get homewards before the dews fall in the woods and the darkness catch them unawares. Now, too, the blackberries are really ripe, as the village children well know, and are all the mellowier that the frost has nipped them a little; as are also the sloes, abounding on the blackthorns in dry and stony districts, and looking, in their delicate purply bloom, as luxurious as hothouse grapes, but tasting at their best little better than verjuice.

As the agricultural year ends and recommences at Michaelmas, it is obviously for this reason that the terms of engagement between labourers and domestic servants and their employers end at the same season. Hence the statute hirings, or, as they are called in country places, "mops," always take place at this time, and usually on some fair-day or market-day, when the farmers' business will bring them to the spot. The endeavours which have been made of late years to do away with this method of hiring servants, which is the direct occasion of the most deplorable scenes of intemperance and immorality, have met with but partial success, and the custom still prevails in many of the farming districts. It is not uninteresting to see the people mustering to the "mop," and approaching the town where it is held from an early hour in the morning, the different servitors characterized by some conventional

badge to mark their occupation, and all dressed in their best and wearing their merriest looks. The farmers and their wives judge them much on the same principle that they would judge animals they were cheapening—we have even seen them look into candidates' mouths to see if their teeth were sound—and seem to value far more their muscle and bone and capacity for endurance than anything else, not excepting even character; and, indeed, as long as this system of hiring endures, it is hardly reasonable to expect them to act otherwise. The etymology of the term "mop," as designating this custom, has given rise to some queer criticism and elaborate research more erudite than convincing; and the word has been traced by learned men to Latin words and to Greek words, and the custom to Greek and Roman customs. For our part, we have no need to hunt so far back for the etymology: to us the word wants no explanation beyond a reference to the facts of the case, which are these. As the Michaelmas hirings, which are chiefly for domestic servants, took place at fairs or markets, it was found that the presence of these servants, clamouring to be hired and thrusting themselves into notice in all parts of the ground, was a nuisance and a hindrance to business. Some authority, therefore, ordered them to congregate into one spot, and there await the hirers; to mark the spot he caused a mop, a very appropriate symbol, to be elevated on a pole, so that it could be seen by all who arrived. Those who wanted to be hired, therefore, "went to the mop," to show themselves; and hence the origin of the term. We can ourselves distinctly remember seeing the mop thus exalted, and the candidates grouped around it, in the second decade of the present century: there surely can be no necessity for deriving the etymology of "the mop" from the ancient Greeks or Romans.

The most popular, and, to the hungry, unfeathered biped doubtless the most agreeable, of the memorials of Michaelmas is the practice of eating goose on Michaelmas-day—a practice rarely "honoured in the breach" by those who are in a condition to honour it in the observance. What was the origin of this custom not even the antiquaries and the learned seem to be able to decide. It is said that no trace of it can be discovered much further than three centuries back. According to a tradition often quoted, it was Queen Elizabeth who originated the custom. It is said that a goose formed a part of the royal dinner when the news was brought to her of the defeat of the Spanish armada, and that her majesty commanded that thenceforth a goose should be served up on the 29th of September of every year, to commemorate the glorious event. There seems, however, to be no valid authority for this statement; and Mr. Brand is of opinion that, if true, it does not prove that the queen originated the Michaelmas goose-eating, but may rather point to the existence of the practice at an earlier period. Gascoigne, who died in 1577, eleven years before the defeat of the armada, has the following passage:—

"And when the tenants come to pay their quarter's rent, They bring some fowle at Midsummer, a dish of fish at Lente, At Christmas a capon, at Michaelmas a goose, And somewhat else at New Year's tide, for fear their lease runs loose,"

—a passage, however, which only testifies to the eating of goose by landlords, and which a modern writer of some humour sarcastically conjectures may be only symbolical of the devouring of the poor tenants by the omnivorous landlords. There is a saying that, "if you eat goose on Michaelmas-day, you will never want money all the year round." We do not pretend to explain the philosophy of this axiom, which seems specially illogical;

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we might quote half a dozen explanations of it, if it were worth while, some more than a century old, but, as they one and all only tend to render that darker which is already dark, and make confusion worse confounded, the reader would hardly thank us for them.

Whatever the antiquity or the origin of the goose-eating custom, for both are in doubt, one thing is clear, and that is, that it has now long been a domestic institution, and is not likely to fall speedily into abeyance. We eat goose on Michaelmas-day—that is, if we are so lucky as to have the chance—not in honour of St. Michael and all angels, but because our fathers did so before us; and we find that, in following their example in this respect, we assist at an agreeable ceremony. In fact, the stubble goose is at this season just arrived at his full growth, and is both plump and succulent, without having lost his juvenile tenderness; which facts we look upon as better arguments for the silly bird's being promoted to *sage* companionship and eaten in good society than any mere antiquated saw or historical allusion whatever. Be the cause what it will, Master Goose is eaten just now in whole flocks and squadrons thousands deep. No sooner do the twenties of September set in than the geese begin to lay down their lives in deference to our yearly custom: they come to London over sea and over land, ready killed and plucked, and they walk to London on their webbed and weary feet, over miles and miles of the stony-hearted high-roads; and in London streets they greet us on every side: we see them alive and waiting to be killed at the buyer's convenience; we see them dead in carts, and waggons, and wicker baskets; we see them undergoing the ceremony of plucking, in cellars and back shops; and we see them plucked on the poulterers' boards, ranged upon their backs in serried ranks.

We have been informed, and we think it likely to be true, that the Michaelmas goose-eating is carried out much more generally in the dining-houses and cook-shops than it is in private families, and that the mass of the goose-flesh which forms the holocaust of St. Michael in London is devoured by the commercial and industrial classes; the very select circles holding rather aloof from the general feast. In the provinces this Michaelmas custom is no less universally observed; and we are not aware that there either rich or poor hesitate to conform to it. On many parts of the Continent gastronomic honours are also periodically paid to the goose, though not, so far as we know, on Michaelmas-day. In France he is eaten, after being scientifically cooked with tender vegetable accompaniments, on St. Martin's day, on Twelfth day, and on Shrove Tuesday; in Denmark it is the custom to roast him and eat him for supper on St. Martin's eve; and the same practice, we are informed, prevails in parts of Germany.* We beg to state in this place that, personally, we have no faith in the principle of exclusiveness involved in these set times and appointed seasons, but have a deep-seated conviction that any hungry fellow, be he Dane or Dutchman, German or Gaul, who can get hold of a stubble goose by fair and legitimate means, will do well to cook him and eat him at any time, without reference to saints' days: he may do so with small danger of offending St. Martin or St. Michael.

An institution not by any means so jocund in its

* In the Roman States, and all through the south of Italy, the native population have an utter aversion to the flesh of the goose, which is there never suffered to appear on the table. The Neapolitans keep the feast of St. Michael as a great holiday, but their Michaelmas knows no goose. It is said that a Neapolitan cook would rather forfeit her place than dress a goose for an English family. Geese in Southern Italy are bred only for the sake of their quills and feathers.

aspect as the goose-eating, but which is even more intimately connected with Michaelmas, is the rent-day. You may dispense with eating goose if you like, but you may not dispense with paying your rent. It is true, if you are a townsman or citizen, and pay quarterly, you have but a quarter's rent to pay now, and, having done the same thing twice this year already, it is no intolerable shock to you to do it again. But the rent-day we are speaking of now is that of the agriculturist who pays his landlord but once a year, that once being always at the Michaelmas quarter, when the crops are all gathered in and the produce of the land is supposed to be realized. This is apt to be a critical time with the farmer, especially for him whose means are circumscribed. He would like to pay his rent, if possible, before he threshes out a single grain of this year's corn, or marches off a single sheep or head of cattle to the market—he feels that if he have to do either, to raise money for his landlord, his neighbours will know it, and note the fact, and his credit may suffer; so he generally contrives, if the thing can be done, to settle the demands of rent-day before turning his produce into cash. In times which we can recall the rent-day was a sort of convivial gathering at the squire's mansion, where a substantial feast of solid fare was provided, at which the farmer did ample justice in presence of the squire himself or of the young heir, telling down the solid gold from his canvas bag, and usually haggling for some additional privilege as he slowly folded up the receipt and deposited it in his bulging pocket-book. This was the rent-day whose story Wilkie has told so admirably in his well-known picture, which will soon have to be regarded as a relic or memento of a past state of things. For now it is no longer the squire or his heir who meets the tenants at the hall, feasting them while he empties their pockets; instead of that it is the legal agent, the man of red tape and fees, who transacts the business in his office or at a morning call—not with a sturdy yeoman of fifteen or sixteen stone, but with the slim gentleman-agriculturist, who, instead of counting down the gold, simply hands over a cheque upon his banker, and the business is done. We have changed all those old figures and faces which Cowper so well described. Where is now the farmer

"Who wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
And spits upon the floor,
Yet, not to give offence or grieve,
Holds up the cloth before?"

Where is the worthy to be found who, pleading in abatement of payments, talks

"of mildew or of frost;
Or tells of storms of hail,
Or of the pigs that he has lost
By maggots at the tail?"

or who "makes his leg and flings his head before," as he enters a room, and pulls a long face and "drops his chin" as he lugs out his money-bag? All that sort of thing is past and gone: the march of the schoolmaster and the spread of practical science have banished it into limbo, and the world has seen the last of it.

And now, having eaten our Michaelmas goose, and paid our rent, let us take another turn out of doors while the weather is yet dry and bracing. The boisterous gales of the equinox have done their work on the tallest of the forest trees, and we walk ankle-deep among the withered leaves as they lie in drifts along the bank-sides, and fill the deep ruts in the green lanes. The fall of the leaves has so thinned the foliage of wood and copse that the eye can penetrate their depths: we see the magpie where we formerly only heard him

chaffer, and can follow the squirrel as he climbs to his lofty drey, or leaps from branch to branch among the tree-tops. We miss a number of the smaller birds which have accompanied our walks all the summer long. The plovers, the whitethroats, the warblers, the wheatears, and many others, have gone south in search of warmer air. The best of our songsters now are the woodlark, the thrush, and the blackbird. We hear little of the smaller birds, unless it be towards sundown, when numbers of them get together in some trysting-tree, usually in the neighbourhood of a human dwelling, and hold a noisy parley for near an hour, which breaks off suddenly, when they all fly off to roost for the night. Where the rivulet winds its way among the moss and rushes towards the marsh, our approach puts up the snipe, who, rising with a whirr some dozen feet or so above our head, darts off at an angle with the speed of an arrow, and disappears. Together with the snipe there have come back the wild-geese, the curlew, the sandpiper, the fieldfare, the Norway thrush; and every passing week will now bring more of the winged winter visitants, until the list of them is complete. The ploughman is merrily at work, and will continue his labours until November is well on; the stroke of the woodman's axe resounds in the forest, where he will fell timber and split the gnarled roots for fuel long after the plough is laid by for the year. You hear the crack of the sportsman's fowling-piece in the preserves, where the pheasant-shooting has begun, and, if you care for the spectacle, you may now witness one or more of those slaughtering battues, where the unsuspecting birds, pampered for months in their shady solitudes, are shot down by hundreds under the absurd idea that such butchery is sport. We turn away from a sight like this, glad to leave it behind us, and, breasting the cool breeze that blows across the downs, walk briskly in the face of it, watching the dense autumnal clouds gleaming in the sunshine, while their broad shadows creep slowly over the landscape, veiling its glories for a while only to restore them clad in fresh beauty. During such walks as these, in this second summer of the year, one loses the sense of fatigue, or, rather, one fails to experience it at all, so pure and invigorating is the air, so exquisitely is the temperature adjusted to the exertion of the bodily powers.

But we must draw bit, as the equestrians say, lest we canter away from our subject and leave Michaelmas too far in the rear.*

THE MAIN CHANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CEDAR CREEK," "THE FERROL FAMILY," ETC.
CHAPTER XXVI.—A WARNING.

FOR reducing a provincial magnate to his true value no test is so effectual as a residence in London. The Triton among minnows very speedily finds himself a minnow among Tritons in the metropolis; a thousand,

* In Germany the goose-killing and goose-feasting is at Martinmas, instead of Michaelmas. A great deal has been written on the connection between St. Martin and the geese. The most reasonable explanation appears to be as follows:—There was an ancient heathen festival held after the vintage. This vintage feast, as was the case with many heathen feasts, which were altered into the festival of a saint, or some other Church feast, was changed into the festival of St. Martin's day, which happened soon after the vintage. This was also the season when geese are best slaughtered; and thus St. Martin's day, and soon St. Martin, became identified with the goose. There is also a story told that when Martin was to be made a bishop—Bishop of Tours, we believe—*noluit episcopari*, he had much rather not, and followed a celebrated ecclesiastical precedent in running away, and disguising himself to avoid consecration. Some geese, however, ran after him, and by their means the saint was tracked to his retreat. (See Hone's "Every-Day Book" on Nov. 11, and also Zedler's Lexicon, art. "Martinsgans.")

or perhaps ten thousand, rich men have pursued the Main Chance as successfully as himself, or made even greater mark in the contemporaneous world. Men in London scarcely know that name which commands homage in his own country. His money must needs be of very startling magnitude to entitle a new man to any eminence in estimation of the capitalists of the great city.

The spring session of Parliament arrived, and circulars were issued by the heads of the Do-nothings and Do-littles respectively, requesting an early presence of their partisans. Mr. Lombard's summons arrived at the handsome Belgravian house to which he had removed his establishment for the season. Lord Wyvern stood sponsor for him at that great Do-nothing club, the Mastodon. "Man of the people," he observed again; "not brilliant, but sound, sir—sound"—touching his temple emphatically with the little finger, on which he wore a priceless heir-loom ring—"and immensely rich, sir—immensely rich," after which declaration of his wealth the members of the Mastodon were much readier to believe in Mr. Lombard's ability.

Now Mr. Lombard found the club rather a bore, and club society far heavier than that of one of his own clerks. There seemed to him a certain paltriness about it. Those young scions of nobility and sons of wealth, with weak constitutions and straw-coloured moustaches covering a lip, who had tried every enjoyment but usefulness, and found all to pall, and were now experimenting in public life, were by no means admirable in his eyes. The Mastodons talked the "shop" of party in a manner which he, being only a provincial, could scarcely comprehend, and failed to be interested about. He had been too long dealing with realities and serious hard work to be able to appreciate the value of the shadow skirmishes over shadowy differences of political principle which were so important in the sight of the Do-nothings. To loiter amid the superb fittings of a club, retailing gossip, was not to his taste. He liked better to be working up his Ocean Navigation Company in the City.

Possessed, like most clever men of business, of the art of multiplying himself by means of able subordinates, he had left all the home works, factories, land reclamations, and the rest, in trained hands, whom he could supervise by correspondence and occasional visits. When a man has brought his money-making apparatus to a particular stage, he finds it to have almost acquired the mystery of perpetual self-motion: it will go on coining sovereigns with so little of his personal attention.

How did the heart of vain Mrs. Sarsfield swell with gratified pride when she read her daughter's name in "The Morning Post" among all grades of titled and commoners' names—in the lists of the receptions of "the very best people," as she phrased it, meaning the grandest and wealthiest! Such paragraphs in the Fashionable Intelligence brought sunshine to her faded face, even on days when her malady of the nerves (closely akin to what our great-grandmothers styled, with admirable simplicity, "the vapours") laid her completely prostrate. The wife of the half-pay officer in the nearest cottage was the audience to whom Pen's glories were recounted. I hope they did not make her envious: though such a result would only have been homage due, according to Mrs. Sarsfield's estimate. Pen's mother wrote her long epistles of advice and reminiscence in a weak but elegant handwriting. She had herself, in her young days, been taken by her "poor papa" through a London season. She had distant remembrances of the Ring and Rotten Row. Now she adopted the lofty tone of a moralist watching from afar the vanities which she

had laid aside, and imparting her experiences for the benefit of the unwary still on the enchanted ground: but how the moralist yet gloated over the details!

"I have had such a charming letter from my daughter," she would say to Mrs. Chutney. "Poor dear, she is quite knocked up with the number of balls and routs she has been attending. But that is the tax of fashionable life, you know—hard labour I call it!" and, smiling serenely, she arranged the shawls of her couch, so as to show to best advantage the Indian cashmere, Pen's last costly gift.

"It is well that you and I are out of it, then," rejoined Mrs. Chutney, smartly. "I am sure I had enough of it in the Presidency, when the major's important public post" (he had been Deputy-Assistant-Substitute-General) "compelled me to go into all the gaiety of the cantonments."

Mrs. Sarsfield raised herself on her elbow—her couch was near the window. "I wonder who that horrid-looking man is, hanging about the gate? He was here yesterday, and asked for Paul. What can he want?"

Mrs. Chutney could have said he looked bad enough for a bailiff, but feared the allusion might be personal. "He's too well-dressed for a beggar," she observed. "Perhaps he has a bill: some of the Douglas tradesmen are getting so impertinent."

This roused Pen's mother to a sense of her dignity. Lying back again languidly, she dismissed the subject with the remark that all their accounts were paid monthly, about which Mr. Sarsfield was most particular. And then she launched into some description of her daughter's dress at the Duchess of Embonpoint's *matinée musicale* the other evening. Mr. Lombard made it an essential point that she should spare no expense, etc.

"Well, it is very easy to achieve the spending of money," said the half-pay officer's wife, with a bitter little laugh, as she thought of the pecuniary tightness at home. "You and I both know that, Mrs. Sarsfield," she added, with a momentary rally of her small military head, which had faced bad weather and small means bravely during her career as the major's helpmeet. She couldn't help feeling that her hardworking little self had deserved some drops of the golden shower quite as well as this young woman. But these rejoinders only served to spice Mrs. Sarsfield's enjoyment in detailing about Pen.

And what did John Green want with Mr. Sarsfield? He hung about till he saw him returning from one of his long walks, and said he wished to speak to him. Bertie, now a tall boy, rebelling against jackets, was sent away, as John Green said the business was "Privat." He was sorry to say he had warned Mr. Lombard without effect; he was Mr. Lombard's "trew friend" (so he would have spelled the words), and had told him there was a great danger hanging over him. He hinted, not obscurely, that he, John Green, could avert the danger if properly applied to. Mr. Sarsfield gazed at him with his honest, unfearing eyes.

"I don't understand you, my good man; I would much prefer having nothing to do with any mystery, if there is one at all. And I perfectly believe Mr. Lombard is able to manage his own business; nor do I think he is a man to be easily frightened."

And when the Australian would have gone farther with his innuendoes, and suggested that Mr. Lombard might take a friend's advice, Mr. Sarsfield stopped short.

"I don't know who you are," said he, "nor what is the power you say you have; but I know this, that Almighty God is in the heavens above, and nearer—for he hearkens to our conversation now—and not an action

can you perform without his permission, whatever your malignant will may be."

If John Green had been reminded of the law against threatenings and putting in bodily fear, he would have swaggered out of the difficulty; but this reception was so strange as to confuse him. He had expected anger or dread, and there was none; yet it is not to be denied that the interview made Mr. Sarsfield uneasy. Over his son-in-law's former life—his beginnings of life—hung a thick cloud. He might have done questionable things in those days of obscurity; many a man has been tempted to such in order to help himself to riches by a short cut. On the whole, he thought it best to tell Ralph Lombard of the stranger's visit; and then, if that gentleman had anything to explain, he would have an opportunity.

The truth was, that John Green had come to Douglas in his process of tracing out Fanny Kenrick and her "boy of the coastguard," who was a Manxman, and thought he might do also another stroke of business, and put pressure on Mr. Lombard through the apprehensions of his father-in-law. He did not think he had altogether failed; and, inspired by renewed anticipations of success, he lost a good deal of money at cards that evening at some low haunt in Douglas.

Mr. Sarsfield's letter reached his daughter's Belgravian mansion by one of the latest deliveries, and was handed to Mr. Lombard as he was drawing on his white gloves to accompany his wife to an evening party. Standing up under the gas-burners in his dining-room he read it, because it was his habit never to postpone the perusal of a letter. And he stayed so long standing and reading it (with his hand over the tell-tale mouth), that the soft-footed attendant had twice told him that Mrs. Lombard waited ere he moved.

"Yes, yes; I shall come in a moment."

He crushed up the letter in his pocket, and went to the drawing-room. Pen was petulant at the delay, as she could often be petulant now. Wealth had not improved her temper. A little frown was stamped on her handsome brow as he led her down-stairs, gentle Esther following. In his abstraction he spoke no word of apology, being a man not given by habit to the petty politeness which is oil on the wheels of domestic life. It was one of the deficiencies of his early training; and, though his mother-in-law thought proper occasionally to extol his gentlemanlike appearance and manner, the enemies of the successful speculator had much to say on their side of the question also, and they abundantly said it.

CHAPTER XXVII.—PLUTOCRACY.

It was a very grand party to which they were going, in a very grand house, and where they were certain to meet very grand people. A cataract of carriages had been rolling down the street since ten o'clock. The street was a calm desert by day, with powdered persons and partly unlivieried butlers airing themselves on the door-steps, and telling each other the tattle of their respective houses. I think they sometimes spoke also about the skeletons in secret closets. But every evening the street asserted itself, and became enlivened under the lamps.

A very short interval seems to separate grandeur and dulness. The assemblies at this distinguished mansion generally crossed the line. I think it was Talleyrand who said that life would not be enjoyable but for its "pleasures." Yet people crowd none the less to fashionable receptions, and covet none the less the embossed cards of invitation which entitle them to get crushed and heated in "good company."

There would be no difficulty in doing so to-night.

The good company overflowed. One saloon presented the attraction of music, another of dancing: all were inhabited by clans of dowagers on the comfortable seats. And, as Pen turned from saluting her hostess, who stood at bay in a pretty boudoir, through which first filed the guests before dispersing on their several ways, she noticed that an elderly lady in a very juvenile costume had her glass at her eye, and was scanning her narrowly.

Mrs. Lombard had ere now quite acquired the *fainé-ante* fashionable disregard of any gaze whatsoever. She did not remember to have seen this stout dowager at any former crush or rout. She would have sailed magnificently onward but for the loud whisper "Introduce me," followed by a check in her career from the hostess.

"The Countess of Pwlheli—Mrs. Lombard," said that hard-working lady, having time for little more, because of the fresh batches of guests filing in. Pen's graceful salute was scarcely over, when a gentleman, who had been speaking to another, turned suddenly round, and she was face to face with the Countess of Pwlheli's husband.

A brilliant colour mounted to her face and neck, for which she was deeply vexed with herself, though it was not more scarlet than the flush on his brow as he bowed. There they were! Both had done the deed of which all the world approves: both had married for money; and they found their reward.

"Very handsome; I haven't seen her before. Who was she, Mr. Gauntlett?" said the lady in the juvenile costume to her equerry-husband. She further tapped his arm sharply with her fan when he did not answer immediately. He was gazing fixedly after Pen, as she swept away on the arm of her husband. "I beg your pardon," he answered, turning his head. "You were saying something?"

"Of course I was," said the countess, pettishly, who was disposed to be jealous. "But it is very little matter what wives say. I asked you who was that very handsome young woman, and the plain, dowdy-looking girl with her? I wonder why I haven't seen her before."

"You forget that we have been all the season at Kissingen, until now," he observed, looking at the countess as fixedly as he had looked after Pen, but not thinking precisely the same thoughts. It was some mental comparison between the wife that might have been and the wife that was. But had he not gained enormously? Had he not done a very wise thing, as society counts wisdom? Was he not pointed out as a rising man—a man who had by one *coup* made his fortune—an example to the whole race of younger sons?

"Mrs. Lombard and her husband's daughter," he continued, not feeling very triumphant. "She was a Miss Sarsfield in my father's county, and so I met her."

"You never mentioned her before," rejoined the countess, somewhat shortly. "She is certainly wonderfully elegant, considering"—oh that the Boisragon blood of Mrs. Paul had heard!—"but her husband bears all the stamp of a parvenu."

"She is a near relative of Wyvern's," said Mr. Gauntlett, not bearing to have Pen depreciated, though the slur upon Pen's husband nearly made up for it. Then he took to biting the tips of his left-hand glove, and his wife, having remarked that he was quite a knight-errant, grew gloomy.

Poor woman! she was subject to humours, of which he had the benefit. Her supreme terror was the growing old, which she considered necessarily synonymous with growing ugly; and it must be confessed that she

had advanced a considerable way towards both. There was no wash or unguent to improve the skin which she knew not, and for which she would not have paid its weight in gold, if efficacious. Arthur Gauntlett was aware that she rouged, and that her gray hair was systematically dyed, though she kept her toilette practices as secret as she could. Her revenge on him this evening was to detain him altogether with herself, and be doubly *exigeante* of his attentions. And so it will be perceived that he paid somewhat for the very splendid board and lodging he had secured himself during life.

"Come to the music-room," Pen had said to her husband. The one thing that did not pall upon her in the list of fashionable pleasures was music. Not that she ever performed herself; indolence had grown upon her, and she was content with effortless listening. She scarcely knew what the songs were this evening; and her husband, equally abstracted, though from a cause widely different, stood beside her for a few minutes, and then said he would go to look for some men of his acquaintance.

The House had risen early that night (a count-out on an Irish question), consequently there was a large sprinkling of M.P.'s in the rooms. There were some of those hard-working barristers whose labour towards judgements or the woolstack makes them almost strangers to their own children, who had been all the morning at chambers and at court, hurrying from one business engagement to another, and then to the House, with scarce an interval for rest or refreshment. What matter for the toil or the fever? By-and-by their hot and trembling hands might grasp some of the crowns of life!

Men were likewise here who were more decidedly of the plutocracy, who were reputed enormously wealthy, yet strove for more; other men who never touched a card or a die, yet were as much gamblers as John Green in his vulgar sittings over a greasy pack in an ale-house. What else than gambling is the incessant speculating in every investment that promises a high dividend—thirty per cent. where five or six could be safely and honestly given? Did they ever, these honourable speculators, connive at the neat management of a rumour, and thereby net thousands? Such exploits are not unknown.

If we hearkened to the group of men where Mr. Lombard stands central, we would ascertain that there is a style of conversation which may be called "moneyed conversation," though perhaps the great noun itself was unnamed. Also that such conversation can go on in the midst of the most distinguished "receptions," while a moving crowd of fashionables, dotted with members of the diplomatic body, and celebrated travellers (the chief to-night had discovered and ascended the highest African mountain of the moon), and renowned philosophers (one present had found out and named seventeen asteroids), and plenty of uniforms wearing the ribbons of orders—the conversation of all which parties was doubtless interesting, if not intellectual. As for the moneyed talk, it (like other sorts) was simply a form of "shop." A great bank had broken. "Forgery and defalcation" were whispered. A man with whom three-fourths of them had shaken hands was deeply implicated: he had merely been making haste to be rich; and concerning such we are told on good authority that they "shall not be innocent."

"The fifteen-pound shares were selling at forty on Tuesday," says one bald head: "near a hundred and fifty per cent. premium."

"No wonder, when the bonuses and dividends came to twenty-five per cent. per annum," rejoined another,

with his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets. Then they threw some stones at the fallen and guilty man who had helped the smash.

"Do you know how he used to do it? Copied the good bills, and discounted them for himself elsewhere. Always hoped to refund, it seems, and his speculations turned out unfortunate."

"Tis said that the securities are almost worthless; money lent on wine warrants, guano at the docks, and such trash; ay, even on old jewellery! I heard of near a thousand pounds advanced on three or four hundred pound debentures in an insurance company."

"Reckless management," said they all. I don't know whether they thought how this broken bank had desolated many humble fortunes, and brought despair into scores of homesteads. It had been widely trusted, and wide was the consequent ruin. But would the crash be a warning to any of the tens of thousands who were eagerly pressing forward in the race after riches? The moral was too frequently preached; it had lost its point.

The moneyed conversation went on. It diverged to such mysteries as Bohemian Coupons, Greek Consolidés, Paraguay Passives, Bolivian Sixes. You and I, dear reader, don't understand the keen interest that attaches to these names. We scarcely know what effect the prospect of a ten per cent. rate of discount would have upon the world. "The dearthness of money" may perhaps strike us as an odd phrase. "General flatness" might remind us of a moory landscape rather than of the absence of commercial stir; as (to descend to a lower grade of speculations) we smile to read of "silk firmly held," "butter firm," and "wool cautious." Yet parties there are to whom this jargon is music.

Now it must be declared that, in their own way, sundry ladies among the good company were working as hard for what they considered the Main Chance as any of the men. There were toilful mothers at it this night in this assembly. They wanted to originate joint-stock firms of wealth by means of matrimony. I fear the young ladies were accomplices likewise, and sugared their smiles for eldest sons.

Esther Lombard was an object for reverse treatment.

Mothers who had many penniless sons patronized her.

Again was her value up in the market: she was sometimes called "the Irish heiress."

"I wish your father would come, my dear," said Pen, after an hour or so. "I promised to look into Lady Fitz-amalek's, and I am tired to-night."

"Perhaps Mr.——" suggested Esther, glancing up at the heavy face of a young dragoon, who had been twirling his infant moustache, and doing the agreeable. The cornet would be only too happy; and so he went to look for Mr. Lombard.

At Lady Fitz-amalek's there was a sort of duplicate affair going on; at least everything and every one looked like the double of everything and every one at Mrs. Fitz-farquhar's: *recherché* toilettes, blaze of jewels, loveliness, rank, talent, and all the rest of it. Mrs. Sarsfield duly read in her Isle of Man retirement the lists of both "receptions," and thought her husband a barbarian both for the sentiment and for quoting Latin to her, when he asked with a smile, "Cui bono?" And he was uneasy when he thought of the warning uttered by that thick-set, rough-bearded stranger.

TEMPLES IN CHINA.

TEMPLES in China are equivalent to mosques in Mahometan countries, or churches in Christendom. When

a Chinaman is asked by a foreigner the name of these edifices, he calls them Joss-houses, and the idols upon their altars are named Joss. This title has risen through a corruption of the Portuguese word *Deos*, signifying God, which the Chinese have indiscriminately applied to all their images, mythological or historical, as it was the first foreign name for the Deity introduced by the Jesuits upwards of three centuries ago. Strictly speaking, therefore, a joss-house, in the acceptation of the Chinese, means the house of God, or place of worship. But, as these temples are dedicated to various kinds of worship, they are designated in the Chinese language according to their special consecration. For example, a temple for the worship of ancestors is named *meaou*, and a temple of Buddha *paou fang*; while the latter description of temples are again divided into six different kinds. Besides temples of a religious character, there are many dedicated to the memory of great men and women; as that at Peking to the wife of the Emperor Houang-te, "the discoverer of the silkworm." But these come more under the head of monuments; and, as the subject may be extended *ad infinitum* where these buildings are numbered by thousands and tens of thousands, we shall confine our remark to religious temples, of which our engraving is a favourable illustration.

This temple is dedicated to the sun, as the great source of heat and light, and is under the protection of the God, or rather Genius of Fire, who ranks first among the symbolical deities of the elements; the others being the Genii of Wood, Earth, Metal, Air, and Water, according to Chinese mythology. In the interior is a colossal image of this myth, the face having a more pleasing expression than the usual hideous idols to be found in these temples. It is made of metal gilded, and is seated on a throne, with the following inscription in Chinese characters: "Ting-me sin-shun-wye;" signifying the "Spiritual throne of the Genius of Fire." At the feet of this image is an altar, with a large iron censer of a tripod form—the same as the one seen in the foreground of the woodcut—containing sand, in which are continually smouldering long sandal-wood matches, which emit a pleasant scented smoke. Below this is the usual kneeling-stool covered with carpet, where the votaries of this deity bow down and supplicate his protection in any matter relating to light or fire. At the side are attendant priests, who invoke the good offices of the fiery genius in the cause of the suppliant, who pays them so much for a bundle of sandal-wood matches, to stick into the sand of the censer, and light them up, sometimes fifty at a time, according as they suppose it will tickle the olfactory nerves of his idolship; but this in all cases is in proportion to the liberal payment of the devotees.

So far this may be considered the ordinary business transacted in the Temple of the Sun, when the customers simply want his excellency to grant them the light of his countenance in dull cold weather to ripen their grain, fruit, etc.; and, as these are generally poor agriculturists, the attendant priests make very little profit out of the ten or twenty *cash*, equivalent to a halfpenny or penny, which each one gives. If no better gains came into their bamboo coffer, they might as well "shut shop," and try some more profitable dodge to draw customers. But there are high days and holidays, when wealthy constituents enter the temple to supplicate his calorific eminence for protection against fire, as if it were a mythological fire-insurance office; or to solicit his patronage over a new furnace or kitchen-range, in order that luck may attend the operations of the cook. The fourth day of every moon is set apart for those who wish to sacrifice

before the altar. In these cases, in addition to the ordinary priests of the temple, a band of music is provided, and extra bonzes go about flourishing hand-censers filled with sandal-wood sawdust, which they swing about—exactly as the acolytes do in the ceremonies of the Romish Church—the smoke from which fills the temple with an agreeable perfume. The writer having been present several times on these grand days of sacrifice, some account of the ceremony may be interesting to his readers.

On these days the low prostration-stool, or rather small platform, is moved some distance from the tripod-censer, and between is a large table to receive the sacrificial offerings of the devotees. As it is expected there will be a large consumption of sandal-wood matches, other smaller censers than the middle one are placed on each side. On the left of the image—in China the place of honour—sit a row of priests, with a plentiful supply of matches behind, which they sell to the customers over a counter. A scribe is seated at the end of this row, who writes out charms, prognostications, or fortunes, to those wishing to consult the future in their fiery relations, or to know if the sun will be auspicious in shining upon them during a contemplated journey. To the right of the image the musicians are seated in a row; their instruments generally consisting of gongs, cymbals, trumpets, and other loud kinds, which they blow and clash in the most discordant and noisy manner. Besides those that are seated, a number of supernumeraries, the servants of the temple, move about arranging the sacrifices of fish, flesh, and fowl on the table, as they are brought in by their superstitious customers, who on such occasions also give more liberal fees to the priests presiding over the sandal-wood matches, or, as they are generally known amongst foreigners in China, “joss-sticks,” because they are burnt before a joss, as already explained.

The gates of the temple are opened before daylight, to catch the early customers who have business to attend to, when the interior is lighted up by great thick tallow candles, coloured red, with paper wicks, which give a dull glare and a greasy smell, as they are never snuffed, and Palmer's patent is not yet adopted there. Then the first comer that enters may present a fowl cooked and smoking hot, which is received by one of the attendants, and placed on the left side of the table nearest the image, which the donor is told will be a happy omen for the success of the affair that brought him to the temple. Thereupon he buys a bundle of joss-sticks, which are lighted and stuck upright in the large censer, while he kneels on the carpet and prostrates himself before the image nine times. This is called the “ko-tow,” and requires that the suppliant should strike his forehead on the ground at each prostration; but few, if any, do it in the public temples. It is only when they are commanded to perform it in the presence of some great functionary, or before a picture of the Emperor; when, should any one evade the due form of this obeisance, his head would not remain long on his shoulders. When the British ambassadors visited Peking on their mission, they were asked to perform this ceremony; but they refused, and one embassy failed in consequence. Now foreigners are only expected to go through the forms of their own countries in the Emperor's presence. In all probability the devotee who brought the boiled fowl was some one going on a journey, and purchased his contribution to the table of the priests at one of the cook-shops adjacent to the grounds of the temple, which are conveniently situated for such purposes, as you find the shops for the sale of *immortelles*

in Paris close to the Père la Chaise. His devotions finished, he leaves the temple and goes on his way rejoicing. Next who comes may be one of the proprietors of the cook-shops, who has just built a new fire-place, and wishes to propitiate the God of Fire by a sacrifice, so that it may give the greatest amount of heat by consuming the smallest quantity of charcoal, which is very dear in China, and the choicest kind of fuel. In his hands he carries a good large dish, with what appears by the gloomy light to be a roast sucking-pig lying on it. Evidently the priests, who eye it askance, take it to be a savory young porker, and they smile accordingly at the promising contributions to a goodly table before them. But the attendant, who carries the dish towards the table to lay it down, whispers audibly to the priests, whose countenances at once drop and assume a sulky aspect. As the suppliant asks for a bundle of joss-sticks, he is told that he will be very unlucky, because he has brought to the sacrificial altar what the great Spirit of Light and Heat utterly abhors—a *roasted dog*. Saying that he was only a poor cook, who had just spent his last *cash* in fitting up a new fireplace, which he had built so that the opening was towards the west, the four sides extended nine inches beyond the boiler, the bricks laid in fine mortar, and having no holes punched in the furnace, according to ancient custom—no matter, though he had complied with these rules of construction, he must know that it is written in the book of “Shen Chang,” the God of the Furnace, that, if he wishes his gains to increase a hundredfold, he should sacrifice a sucking-pig, and if a thousand-fold, then bring a large boar's head. So he takes his brown-crust puppy away and returns with a sucking-pig.

Numerous small contributors to the sacrifice enter after daylight—some with a dish of rice, some with vegetables, others with fish, pork-chops, shrimps, prawns, sweetmeats, melon-seeds, ginger, nuts, and viands of all kinds; so that there is no lack of variety for dinner or dessert. About this time the table begins to show a fair spread of eatables, but nothing costly. Most of the small contributors remain to see what is going on, and to whiff the strong oily flavour rising from the hot dishes, which is sweet to a Chinaman, and sickening to a European. All this time the musicians (save the mark) are banging away at their gongs and cymbals, or squeaking shrill notes from their clarionets. Suddenly, at a signal from one of the watchful priests, they strike more loudly than before, and one man, with a trumpet that slides out like a telescope, blows in it, and shakes it with a *tremoloso* movement, emitting a sound like the bellowing of a wild bull, and blows again until he is almost black in the face. Looking towards the entrance, the cause of this *fanfaron* is apparent, as a portly Chinese gentleman, with his two sons, all richly attired in silk, come up the steps and walk into the temple, followed by several servants carrying dishes of all sorts—fowl, fish, turtle, ham, and, above all, the head of a hog nicely garnished *à la Chinois*. The attendants of the temple pushed the crowd of poor devotees aside, and made way for the rich man and his contributions, which they laid with many flourishes upon the board, placing the *pièce de résistance*, the boar's head, in the centre. Then the father and sons purchased a good supply of joss-sticks, which were placed in the tripod censers, while those carrying the hand-censers swung them about in great style, sending a cloud of smoke up under the nose of the idol, which looked large in the haze. The devotees next dropped on their knees and went through the customary genuflections, while the surrounding crowd, which by this time thronged the temple, uttered

an approving "Hí yah!" at what they considered a very grand scene, where all the senses, especially that of smell, were so agreeably represented.

In this manner other smaller contributions come in, until the table "groans" with abundance; while the

these priests, whom they despise. It is their inherent belief in fortune, or, more correctly speaking, luck, and their slavish adherence to custom, that make them the dupes of their own imaginations. Some writers call this feeling superstition; but we are not of this opinion,



TEMPLE OF THE SUN, PEKING (from a photograph).

priests, musicians, and attendants encouragingly wink at each other on the auspicious results of the day. Night closes in, and the gates of the temple are shut as the last of the devotees makes his exit. Then the inmates form a snug party in discussing the viands, after going through a needless formality of offering them to the image of the gentleman who represents the sun. As on such feast-days there is frequently more than enough for all the hungry stomachs which have fasted the livelong day, the more valuable portion of the dishes is sold to the cook-shop keepers, who in many instances buy back from the priests what they sold to their dupes. Perhaps it is too much to call them by this term, as we understand it in Europe, for they are not deceived by

as not a man of the devotees supposes for a moment that the wooden image touches the food he brings, but is either eaten by the priests or sold. If you ask him why he does it, he can give no explanation, further than it is the custom of his country and has been handed down by his ancestors. Other writers have gone as far as to call it religion, which, if it mean anything, must refer to the religion of Satan. For, of all the ceremonies invented by man, this, when at its climax, as we have endeavoured to describe, is the most hideous to a sensitive mind who associates the idea of religion with it. At first we were inclined to look upon these pagan ceremonies as the rites of Beelzebub; but, when we inquired more closely into the matter, we treated them as mere

shows, without any religious significance. Judging from outward appearances, also, we should say that very little of a sacred feeling is entertained by the devotees, priests, and lookers-on in these mythological temples. There you see the commonest hewer of wood and drawer of water smoking his nasty pipe, or picking vermin from his clothes, while the ceremonies go on. Even the priests, when not busy selling their joss-sticks, squat down near their idols and smoke away unconcernedly, just as if it was a Punch-and-Judy show, by which they obtained their living. And they have such a puppet exhibition in China, which plays historical dramas, and to which the natives pay as much respect as they do to the performances in the temples.

RUSS PICTURES.

V.—THE COSSACKS OF THE URAL.

YEARS ago, when George III was king, ay, and for a good time afterwards as well, the bugbear of Russian domination hung like a storm-cloud over Europe. The hoof of the Cossack—less his own, perhaps, than that of his horse—was a never-failing resource, a kind of literary property for an editor whose subjects for sensation-leaders grew scarce. Napoleon's invasion of Russia had awfully failed. Frost, snow, and the lance of the untiring Cossack had stricken the great army dead.

The Cossack himself was a visible presence in our streets after Waterloo. He is depicted as a ruthless and awful being, with slit eyes, snub nose, yawning mouth, and shaggy mane, insatiable, greedy, and brutal; never known to spare man, woman, nor child, and seeking the chance of giving cities to the flames. His favourite diet was believed to be raw meat, garlic, and tallow-candles, when he could steal those luxuries, failing which, he could manage with train-oil. Hetman Platoff was reported to have nudged Field-marshal Blücher as they rode through London streets, exclaiming, "What a city for to shack!" Hordes of the creatures were represented as constantly ready to rush down upon and swallow up devoted Europe the moment their priest-pope-czar-king should slip the leash.

The Crimean war in great degree dispelled these illusions, while it struck off the mask from the Frankenstein of Russian power, which had so long cheated the world; it taught us also that the dreaded Cossack was merely a man like other men, uncivilized, savage, and wild. We saw the Cossack in the field, and found him a brave and hardy soldier, abhorrent in our eyes as to pillaging dead and stabbing helpless wounded, but upon the whole a little more humane than was previously supposed. He has since displayed his military abilities in Poland, where he seems to be much about the same as we found him before Sebastopol. A new phase of his character—new, at least, to the English reader—may be studied by looking at the Cossack of peace as he lives on the borders of the Caspian, in the country watered by the Ural.

There can be little doubt that the Cossacks inhabiting the Ural country are descended from the Cossacks of the Don. Somewhere about the fifteenth or sixteenth century hordes of the latter discovered in one of their predatory forays the mouths of the Ural river, and settled upon the banks of that unknown region.

Hence, history tells, they sallied forth during the summer months upon their daring raids. In 1580 they plundered merchantmen trading upon the Caspian to Persian ports—a proceeding which caused the Shah-in-Shah to send in his little bill for damages to the Czar

in Moscow. Justice moved slowly in that distant age; and it was not till 1655 that a number of the thieves' descendants were sent as punishment to carry arms against the Poles. This was the first military service they rendered to the Russian crown. Peter the Great expended Cossacks largely in his campaigns against the Swedes and Turks, and Catherine II granted the tribe extensive tracts of land, with the exclusive privilege of fishing. This last, as you will presently see, was a boon of considerable value.

The Ural Cossacks are a hybrid race; but of a mixture of Tartars, Mongols, Persians, and numerous wandering tribes has finally sprung a physically handsome type. It must be borne in mind that, although this experience contradicts the notion generally held, yet the warlike (and hideous) Cossack of our acquaintance belongs to the tribe of the Don. His Ural brother, upon the whole, possesses a fine-looking and distinctive national physiognomy. Now and then, in isolated cases, you will see a face of the original stamp appear. Broad shoulders, slim figures, with remarkably fine and expressive eyes, are general characters. The free and unconstrained habits necessitated by the great range of their possessions, the general opulence, and the healthy climate, have not been without their influence in the formation of the race.

The Cossacks are hospitable in the highest degree, friendly and obliging to all; they are also brave and singularly enterprising. The word "impossible" seems to have been blotted out of the Cossack dictionary, if any such there be, and courage, subtlety, and energy to have been inserted in its stead. Until recently they have been a troublesome and unruly race; latterly, however, a species of military organization has been introduced among them, which seems well suited to the popular taste, and they are beginning to settle down into a quiet and tolerably contented section of the Russian empire.

The town of Uralsk, the seat of the military hetman, was swept away by fire some thirty years ago. Now it is a handsome place, consisting of imposing stone buildings, with a population of 20,000 souls. The traveller is startled to find so active a community at the extremity of the civilized world. Trade and commerce are busy in the streets. The Cossacks dispose of fish, caviare, bladders, tallow, and sheep-skins to the numerous Russian merchants settled in the town. General prosperity is apparent at the first glance, but the strange figures and faces of Tartars, Kirghis, Bashkirs, and Kalmucks, mingled with the frequent Cossack uniforms, impart a foreign air which reminds one Asia is at hand.

The territory of the Cossacks stretches far away along the banks of the Ural, which separates their possessions from the Kirghis steppes. The soil, once probably the bed of an ancient Caspian, consists mostly of a sandy clay, magnificent corn-land, yielding the well-known Belaturka and Kubanka wheats of commerce. Watermelons are also grown in such quantities that a waggon-load may be obtained for two silver copecks. Further to the south along the Caspian the soil becomes more sandy, mixed with patches of salt, while the banks of the delta at the river's mouth are covered with interminable fields of reeds, shutting out the view of the sea. Among the reeds are numbers of islets, inhabited by millions of gulls, pelicans, and aquatic birds. The foot-traveller can hardly advance a step without trampling upon a nest: a shot darkens the air with screamers on the wing. This district produces nothing but clouds of gnats in spring, which almost drive to distraction man and beast. During gnat time, April, May, and June, Cossacks camping out set up their sleeping places upon

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heights where the wind blows away the tormentors, or half smother themselves in rolls of thin linen.

Towards the north are occasionally found patches of extraordinary fertile black loam, that seems able to grow anything, and never needs manure. The population is, however, too small to utilize to their full extent the agricultural resources of the country. In the vicinity of Uralsk the soil is tolerably cultivated, and in the interior of the country one finds now and then settlements of wealthy Cossacks who till land and breed cattle; but hundreds of acres have never yet been disturbed by the plough.

These fallows are mostly used for pasture. Rich Cossacks often possess 10,000 to 20,000 fat-tailed sheep, purchased from the Kirghis. Wandering Kalmucks are hired to act as shepherds, strong, active young fellows, riding camels or swift horses, and always taking their families along with them. If a halt is made at any particular spot for several days, a light tent is set up; the images of the gods—many Kalmucks still worshipping Lama—are reverently established in the inner part, and the family take up their residence in the outer compartment. It makes a strange impression to come upon such a Kalmuck household, swarming with vermin, grimed with dirt, with the gaudy dresses and brown Mongol faces of the women, and the quaint-looking Tartar babies.

The pursuit of agriculture, trade with the Russian merchants, and barter with the Kirghis make up in great measure the occupations of the Ural Cossacks. But the chief wealth of the country is, after all, the fishery, extending down the Ural from Uralsk to the Caspian, a distance of four hundred and seventy-five verst. The pursuit combines the absorbing delight of a favourite occupation with the wild excitement and uncertainty of gambling. Favoured by fortune, one Cossack will often catch in a few hours as many large fish as bring him one hundred silver roubles, while his neighbour will not take a fin throughout the day.

Yet it is not for the sake of profit only that the Cossacks fish. Vegetables are little grown and less esteemed; meat and grain are excellent and very cheap, but fish, and above all caviare, are as indispensable to these people as the air they breathe. Now, be it said that the caviare of commerce, as known in this country, is a very inferior production to the same article upon the spot where it is prepared. It may not, perhaps, be out of place to call to mind that this production consists of the roe of the sturgeon, made into cakes of three to four inches broad, and one inch thick. It is formed by separating the membranous covering from the roe, washing it in vinegar, salting, adding chopped onion and spice to flavour, and pressing the mass. It is exported in small casks.

Lightly as some may esteem the product here, after a lengthy journey, it is said, when freshly made, to be an extraordinary delicacy. This holds good, particularly of the large-grained, yellowish, or amber caviare, which, being a rarity, is unknown to commerce. The delicate flavour of the roe newly taken from the fish possesses something peculiar, absent by the time it reaches foreign parts. In 1857 a pound of fresh caviare was worth twenty to twenty-five copecks (8d. to 10d.) at the place of manufacture, but, owing to the increased demand for export, the price has greatly risen since.

For all these reasons their fishery is a matter of extreme importance to the Cossacks, and enters largely into daily life. The children in the streets play at fishing; the probable "take" forms a constant subject of discussion; the time for the legal opening is awaited with

ill-concealed impatience. The "fishery" is altogether so singular in character that a description can hardly fail to be of interest.

The Caspian Sea contains vast wealth of toothsome fish, which annually ascend the Volga and the Ural river to deposit their spawn. Chief among these are the varieties of the sturgeon tribe, valuable for their roe, whence caviare, and for their air-bladders and sounds, which yield isinglass. The largest of the genus is the huso, a behemoth, if all accounts be true, of fabulous size. That unreliable personage, the oldest inhabitant, avers that, in elder times, it was nothing unusual to take a huso weighing forty to fifty pood, the Russian pood = forty pounds avoirdupois. A two-thousand-pound sturgeon is certainly rather a large mouthful to swallow. The fish do, however, attain considerable bigness, for husoes six feet long, and weighing fifteen to twenty pood, are still occasionally taken.

Next in rank comes the sturgeon proper, with his inferior variety, the schipp. Sturgeon caviare is usually considered the best, though some prefer that yielded by the huso. Another kind is the sevruga, or starred sturgeon, which attains a length of four feet, the snout occupying a sixth part of the body. This fish is found by millions; in flavour and for excellence of caviare and isinglass it is highly esteemed. The sterlet, or little sturgeon, averaging from two to three feet, closes the list. This variety is said by Cuvier to be the famous elops of the ancients. The flesh is extraordinarily white and delicious, causing the sterlet to be sometimes conveyed alive at vast expense to St. Petersburg. The caviare is thought too fine-grained and muddy, and is held in little regard. In addition to the sturgeon tribe, the Ural is visited by shoals of white salmon, great shod and pike, and ordinary fresh-water fish.

Now, as it is the habit of the fish to ascend the stream at certain periods of the year, some remaining during winter in the river, others—as, for example, the sevruga—returning to the sea immediately after spawning, a weir is constructed every year below the town, which prevents the large fish from passing beyond the limits of Cossack territory.

I visited this place in summer, accompanied by the newly-appointed governor of Orenburg. The fishery not being open, and the hetman anxious to exhibit some fragment of fisher life, took his visitors to the weir, where the water teemed with fish. At a sign from the hetman, a strong, active Cossack stepped out of the crowd, threw off his boots and upper clothing, and took in his right hand a strong iron hook, made fast to a long rope held by other Cossacks at the weir. The man hastily signed the cross, then quietly slipped into the water and disappeared. Silence ensued, all eyes fixed upon the stream, and the strangers breathless with expectation. Presently the rope shook, the Cossacks on the bank hauled in, and the diver appeared upon the surface, dragging after him a huge struggling fish, with the hook struck through his jaws. The booty was drawn ashore amid shouts of exultation.

We were speechless with surprise, from which the governor was the first to recover. Turning to me, he remarked, in French, that the fish must surely have been somehow tethered to the beams of the weir. It was perfectly impossible to catch a creature of that size, swimming at liberty with a simple hook.

The hetman, although not understanding what passed, guessed its meaning with characteristic intelligence. He ordered his men to bring up a long pole, sharpened at the point, and, placing it in the governor's hand, begged him to endeavour to strike the bed of the river

near the weir. The experiment was made several times, but the governor upon each occasion received so severe a shock that he was unwillingly forced to admit he must always have struck upon a fish. Finally, when dashing downwards with all his force, and probably coming full upon a big fellow, the pole was torn violently out of his hand.

The hetman then explained that the feat was by no means so difficult as it appeared. The number of fish pressing and rubbing around the beams of the weir was so great that the man, quietly sinking down among them, was scarcely noticed, and, if a practised hand, had leisure to survey and select at pleasure. The only requisite was to strike the iron hook well through the jaws.

In March, April, and May the sturgeon mostly ascend the stream in large shoals, the *sevruga* being the latest. Extensive as the fishery still continues, old people declare that both the number captured and the size of the fish have sensibly decreased in recent times. The great lakes in the Volga and Ural, at Astrakan, and in the Caspian itself, have probably contributed to this result; for it is difficult even to conceive what enormous masses of these splendid fish, partly salted, partly frozen as hard as flint, or dried in long strips, are annually exported and consumed throughout the empire during the fast seasons ordered by the church.

On the other hand, it may well be that the decrease of large fish is partly owing to the constantly increasing silting-up of the Ural mouths. A Cossack at Guriew declared he had seen in the spring, when the fishery is legally closed, an enormous huso stranded upon a sand-bank at the mouths of the river. The back of the fish was high out of the water, and it was only after the most violent struggles the huge creature was able to extricate himself from the mud, and launch out into deep water.

A TRIP TO GUERNSEY.

THERE is an exquisite nook of British land, within easy reach of the south coast, which is not known, or prized, or frequented half so much as it deserves to be, and that is Guernsey. I hold that it is good, for every one who can afford it, once in every twelve months to seek the sea-side. Of course I speak of those only who are away from it habitually. Residents on the coast will do well for a time, and during any absence which they can spare, to look away from the sea, if it were only to feel more freshly and revivingly its many charms and glories on their return. Let these plunge inland, and haunt the rivers, and mountains, and lakes of the interior. The pleasant park and the babbling brook, the most quiet rural scenes, will bring to them that refreshment and change of ideas which they need. That which all should have periodically, if it be possible, is change. He who dwells in some far-off solitude among the mountains, or in the green recesses of nature, would act wisely, if his purse can well bear the charges, to go for a while into the roar of the great Babylon, or to some of our mighty manufacturing towns, and there contemplate modes of life so different from his own. He may be somewhat stunned, amazed, revolted; but it will be his own fault if he be not improved. He will return more thoughtful and more thankful. He will have forged anew the links of brotherhood with the "masses" of whom he has so often read, but with whom he so seldom comes in contact. Such change, whether from solitude to the city, or from the city, or from inland scenes, to the

neighbourhood of the ocean, may be described as the bath of the soul, which refreshes and reinvigorates it.

And, if change be well, then the more total and absolute the change the better. This fact explains the increasing fondness for foreign travel. Foreign manners, cities, and towns of a new and strange aspect, even the freedom and conviviality of the *table d'hôte*, that pleasant institution which, though often attempted, has never yet been thoroughly acclimatized on English soil—all these react with a refreshing and bracing influence on the mind jaded with business or corroded with care. Touching foreign travel, no quotation is more trite than that of Horace:—

"Cælum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt."

But Dr. Arnold, on returning from his usual summer continental trip, said that he had proved the shallowness and falsity of it, as he had found a refreshment in drinking in every instant a sense of the reality of foreign objects, and a mainspring given to his thoughts and feelings which he could hardly have realized from well-worn and familiar English scenes. Still the foreign language is a drawback. The strangeness of a tongue which we cannot use causes more perplexity and discomfort than persons readily acknowledge. By not enabling us to bargain, or even fully to understand contracts, it is no doubt a source of frequent pecuniary loss, and perhaps still more frequently of a suspicion of unfairness. But the very suspicion irritates; and a daily mental friction from this source mounts up at least to a considerable nuisance. At all events, if you can leave England without ceasing to talk English, and without requiring to know any other tongue, you avoid a great discomfort and annoyance in your travels. And this you find in visiting the Channel Islands. You are, in a manner, at home, and yet abroad. English and French culture there amalgamate, but the English language predominates: all know it and all use it, except a few of the country peasantry. In Guernsey both languages are taught in all the schools. Moreover, the French customs, laws, and manners which prevail in these islands are not at all of the modern Paris, or revolutionary type, but of the good old Norman stock. And Normandy was the cradle of our race almost as much as Northern Germany. It was also the fountain of a good part of our language, of our laws, and of our glorious church architecture. All this gives a genuine home feeling to him who goes to sojourn in the British isles off the coast of Normandy. And this is much increased by knowing that Queen Victoria has, in her widely-extended dominions, no more loyal subjects than in these fair isles.

Let it be confessed that there is a certain charm in living in a place where there are no politics, though there may be some local squabbles. These are, of course, quite unheeded by the stranger. He lives in a land where he knows there is not one disaffected heart, and where there are no political questions. Let us be thankful that such moral oases are yet to be found. Even the tax-gatherer is rarely seen. By-the-bye there is now an income-tax in Jersey, but there is none in Guernsey. How many are there who, contemplating retirement from trades, professions, or other avocations, are considering where they shall then fix their abode! Let them think of the Channel Islands.

Surely these Channel Islands have been singularly blessed in the matter of government, and in their political relations—or rather, we may say, in their absence of political relations—to the rest of the world. They have only had the relations of commerce; they have enjoyed

all the safety of England, while they have escaped its taxes and its political turmoils; they have for ages and ages been quietly sheltered under its power, felt at every crisis its supporting arm, and received from the parent state nothing but blessings. But only think what curses they have escaped in not belonging to France! If these islands had formed part of the great nation, they would have been dragged at the tail of it through all the mire and blood-shedding and tumults of the French Revolution. The guillotine would have been at work in the squares of St. Helier and St. Peter's Port. And ever since the marine conscription and the army conscription would between them have drained away all the vigorous manhood of the islands, and starved both their agriculture and their commerce. Nor would the consequent political storms have been less fatal to their peace and happiness. Legitimists, Orleanists, Bonapartists, would all have been represented, and would in turn have wreaked their vengeance on each other, and made each of their small communities a miniature Paris. Deeply are they to be congratulated in having no share in the "glories" of France, but what we should rather call her *blood-guiltiness* and moral inebriety. Heavy taxation would have been the lightest of the evils incident to French sovereignty. What wonder that not a trace of disaffection to England exists, or ever has existed, in what may be regarded, politically considered, as "Islands of the Blessed"? And, if the natives, loyal as they are, are still not as thankful and thoughtful of these precious privileges and immunities as they might be and ought to be, it is only another instance of the ingratitude and thoughtlessness which we are all guilty of, more or less. In our convulsed Europe the spectacle of small communities, thus morally as well as physically insulated, living age after age in unbroken peace and content, free from wars, free from invasion, or even the alarm of it, we may almost say—for the attempt at Jersey in 1781 is the one exception—is indeed a refreshing one for every lover of human happiness.

There is an interesting moral question connected with such small insularity as this cluster of islets presents which I can only glance at. Every person in them is thoroughly known, his goings out and comings in, and all his ways and associates, as far as human inspection can reach. This may not be an unmixed good, but it must act as a powerful restraint. To be lost, as one in London is, in an ocean of human existence is just the antipodal state to this, and can scarcely be called a wholesome one. Certain it is that crime is very rare in the islands, and they have at all times been considered as rather Puritanical communities. The French language seems to have imported no French free-thinking, science, or frivolity: the French element has been rather of the old Huguenot type, not the Catholic.

And now I must close these general reflections, and describe Guernsey and Sark as they appear to the summer tourist. But first a word about the sea-passage. The Channel Islands have fewer summer tourists than they otherwise would, owing to the reputed greater roughness of the passage. The Race of Alderney has a very bad name, like the Mull of Cantire on the Scotch coast. But, in going to Jersey or Guernsey, we do not enter the Race, though we go unpleasantly near to it. There is a conflict of tides and currents as you enter the deep bay which runs up to St. Malo. The roughest part of all is just opposite the Caskets, those rocky islets crowned by three lights, and well known to all navigators.

The Weymouth and Southampton boats never pass the Caskets but in broad daylight, though there is a depth of thirty fathoms of water around and close to

them; for the whole navigation of this bay is most dangerous. The vessel passes between the Caskets and a long line of foaming breakers only a couple of miles off to the west, denoting the presence of concealed rocks in mid-ocean. Often at Guernsey, when looking on the sea at low water, I have been appalled at seeing rocks cropping out of the water almost in mid-channel, showing how full daylight and the best charts are necessary to safe navigation.

Having made two trips to these islands, and resided a fortnight at St. Helier, and ten days in Guernsey, I can truly say that I admire both, but that I prefer Guernsey. Its attractions deserve to be better known than they are. Jersey is the larger island, has nearly twice the population, 55,000 against 30,000, and more than four times the number of English residents. So much better known is it, that nearly everybody you talk to about them seems to assume that Jersey is the superior island and ought to be preferred. I think differently. Guernsey seems the scorned and slighted sister, though she has many points of superiority. Firstly, the soil, if less fertile, is drier and better for health. If you are a farmer, and want profit out of the land, you will look at the thing in a different light; but, if you are only intent on health and comfort, then the more dry and rocky soil of Guernsey will suit you better. There is indeed much granite in Jersey, but not so much as in the windward island. Guernsey is wholly a wedge of granite set in the sea. It exports granite just as naturally as Jersey exports potatoes and grapes. It is its great export, though it also exports cider. The streets of London are paved chiefly with Guernsey granite; the harbour of St. Sampson's is choked with craft engaged in the stone trade.

Let us dwell for a moment on this question of granite. I never gaze on granite, the hardest, the cleanest, and the most salubrious rock in existence, without my mind being carried beyond its mere physical aspect. Ruskin finds great virtues and significance in this ancient rock. He says, and how truly, "The sea which washes a granite coast is as unsullied as a flawless emerald." Only those who know nothing about it will think that the sea is everywhere the same; whereas one sea differs widely from another sea in beauty and transparency. The intensely blue colour and transparency of the seas about these isles, especially about Guernsey, remind one of the indigo blue of the Mediterranean. What Ruskin next remarks is the purity of the soil resulting from the decomposition of granite rocks. "They decompose into the purest sand and clay: the clay is the finest and best that can be found for porcelain; the sand, often of the purest white, always lustrous and bright in its particles. The result of this law is a peculiar aspect of purity in the landscape composed of such rocks. It cannot become muddy, or foul, or unwholesome." I can also testify to the truth of the following remarks:—"It is almost impossible to make a cottage built in a granite country look absolutely miserable. Rough it may be, neglected, cold, full of aspect of hardship; but it never can look *foul*, no matter how carelessly, how indolently its inhabitants may live: the water at their doors will not stagnate; the soil beneath their feet will not allow itself to be trodden into slime. . . . Do the worst they can, there will still be a feeling of firm ground under them and pure air about them, and an inherent wholesomeness in their abodes which it will need the misery of years to conquer." And I hope Ruskin is not less true than fanciful when he adds, "It is remarkable to what an extent this intense purity in the country seems to influence the character of its inhabitants; and, as far as I remember, the

inhabitants of granite countries have always a force and healthiness of character," etc., etc. The physical truth of all this is apparent to our senses, and I will not say that the moral inference is pure fancy. Guernsey, then, is a pre-eminently wholesome and pleasant land to dwell in; for it is a lump of granite, and, if for no other reason, I should prefer it to reside upon to the richer but deeper soil of the sister isle. Being also to the windward, it has a more bracing air; and those who have dwelt long in both say that the soft, enervating feel of the Jersey atmosphere is rarely experienced, and that there is much less rheumatism. In Jersey this complaint among the peasantry is well-nigh universal; and so, too, is the persuasion that red flannel is a warmer covering to the skin than white.

There is another element of superior healthiness in my favourite isle; and that is the absence of a too prolific vegetation. Look all over Jersey, as you easily may from the top of the Royal Tower, and it looks like one orchard, and as nearly flat as it is possible to be. It is almost choked up with trees: one looks in vain for heaths, or open plains. The hedges are high, and the roads are lined on each side with trees; a luxury in hot and dry weather, but quite a nuisance in wet weather, for they cause a perpetual dampness. Guernsey, too, may be equally well surveyed over its whole extent from the top of the Queen's Monument, which stands on the apex of the hill down the slopes of which St. Peter's Port is built; and there you see a country much smaller and less fertile, but with a much more diversified landscape. It is not profusely, but quite sufficiently timbered; and then, too, you see stretches of open country, and not one flat continuous orchard. The ocean breezes sweep over it more freely; and that, with the drier and rockier soil, is enough to account for that superior adaptability to ordinary constitutions which Guernsey folk assert.

I was delighted with St. Peter's Port. It shows very imposingly indeed when seen from the water. Being built on the side of a hill, and that of considerable steepness in some places, the houses rise in successive tiers or terraces above one another. Villas and mansions are seen plentifully sprinkled about among gardens and trees. There is nowhere any dense or formal mass of houses: the different heights, and the abundance of gardens and foliage everywhere interspersed, give a charming variety, and at the same time a sense of repose both to eye and mind. The town stands on two ranges of hills, with a valley between. The harbour accommodation is excellent—too great, indeed, either for the present or for any foreseen future trade of the island. Some few years ago there was only one small harbour: now there are some half-dozen basins and docks, with a large outer harbour, and piers all of the most solid masonry stretching far out, and which afford most delightful promenades. Steamers can come in at all states of the tide, and land their passengers at once on the pier without the need of boats. This alone makes a great difference in point of comfort, as paterfamilias knows well. At St. Helier a boat, and that for a considerable distance, is often a necessary accompaniment to landing. The debt incurred by the island in erecting the new harbour and piers at St. Peter's Port has had the effect of raising the dues on all imports. Furniture imported, which before was free, now pays a duty; but the pleasure of walking on such noble piers and inhaling the breeze quite makes up for any slight difference in the cost of imported articles.

There is another admirable feature of a marine residence, for which the authorities deserve all possible

credit. There is such bathing accommodation as I have seen nowhere else, and I have seen all our watering-places. There are two special bathing-piers, sloping at a gentle incline down to the water, and provided with steps at the end. The principal of these is of a horse-shoe, or rather magnet shape, thus enclosing an ample basin, with stairs on both sides; so that the state of the tide is wholly immaterial for bathing. At low water you go to the end of the pier, and can thence plunge at once overhead. At high water, or if it is at all rough, you can bathe within the basin, and thus be protected from too strong a dash of the waves. At the other pier there is a shed, and, on both, seats hewn in the rock with the most provident care for your comfort. Nor will the bathing for ladies be less complete. When I was there a tunnel was being made through a rock, which will emerge into a sheltered cove. There will be a lodge and an iron gate at this tunnel, so that the utmost secrecy and separation will be obtained. And what a pleasure is it to plunge into such emerald-green water as you find on this granite coast! Seen in bulk, it is an indigo blue; but seen in shallow depths, or if you hang over the stern of the vessel, and mark the colour of the water as shown against the rudder, you will observe the tenderest and freshest green, of a purity and lustre and living quality which makes by comparison not only all the paints and pigments which the art of man can fashion, but the emerald itself, a dull thing. No wonder that, with such bathing facilities, and with such crystal waters, Guernsey produces a fine race of swimmers and divers. Throw a copper into twenty feet of water, and so clear is it that a boy will dive after it and bring it up in his mouth, as he sees it so distinctly that he does not require to feel after it with his hands. The very limbs of the young seen through this transparent medium acquire a radiancy which the glow of sea-nursed health indicates. I would sum up all in one word: if you want first-rate bathing, go to Guernsey. Never mind, in getting there, a little tossing off the Caskets.

And now let us have a look at the town itself. It is a most agreeable and picturesque town, abounding in excellent houses, and uniting with solid English comforts all the picturesque variety of foreign towns. Like the latter, the houses are often very high in the main streets; but you will hardly find two alike, so great is the diversity in form, and height, and colour, and fashion of roof and window. It is hilly, being built on the slopes of two high hills; but what a gain is this, both as respects health and salubrity! In this St. Peter's Port contrasts favourably with the generally flat site of St. Helier. But, if you select a house on the Esplanade, a fine road in front of the sea, and quite level, you avoid all inconvenience of steep ascent. But most would prefer houses higher up, among gardens and vinerias. Flowers are found everywhere, and the tallest and finest fuchsias I have ever beheld. Leading up from the shore to the upper parts of the town the stranger will find a number of narrow lanes, or rather passages between walls, and not more than three or four feet wide. They reminded me of a similar feature at Yarmouth. If directed to go up one of these, in his way to some lodging to which he has been recommended, he will be apt to turn back, repelled by what seems an unlikely approach to a good quarter; or he will demand of his guide, "Where in the world are you taking me to?" thinking there must be some mistake. But there is no mistake at all. Let him go on, and he will soon come on excellent houses, often with gardens and lawns, and where no one need be ashamed to live, spite of the narrow and humble

approach. He will very soon learn to overlook this circumstance, as really not worth thinking about. I came rather to admire the air of quietness and seclusion which it gives; but, as we are unused to such approaches in England, visitors are at first averse to fixing themselves in a house which is thus approached. They tremble for their dear national idol, their respectability; but the alarm on that score is quite groundless.

The Guernsey market is admirable, both in convenience and in the abundance of its supplies. The fish-market, cool, lofty, and spacious, is quite a model for such a building. The cheapness, variety, and freshness of all its stores cannot be exceeded anywhere. Scarcity is impossible in such a land. Conger-eel soup is a favourite dish among all classes. The poorest have it, though, of course, without the etceteras which flavour it at richer tables. For fruit, fish, and flowers the Guernsey market is excellent. You may get such a bouquet for a penny! One feature of the town I was delighted to see—the abundance of pumps and fountains. Wherever you go you find them. There are more than a hundred of them in the town, all yielding the purest water.

Add to all these advantages and charms what I hold to be an almost unrivalled sea view: what constitutes it such is the number of islands which are within sight. On the day of the regatta in August one might see with the naked eye not only the picturesque isles immediately in front—Herm and Jethou distant about five miles, and Sark eight miles off, standing farther back, but not intercepted—but even the distant Alderney, and the white cliffs of the coast of Normandy; while southward and eastward Jersey was equally within view. Alderney and Jersey may only be visible on very clear days; but Herm, Jethou, and Sark the eye may always repose upon with delight. How different is this from a blank sea view, and how much more enjoyable! One feels these neighbouring isles as a sort of companionship. The deep becomes hospitable. A channel I always find more attractive than an open waste of waters. One knows these islands, too, to be the abodes of peaceful and happy life, singularly removed from the temptations and corruptions which beset life in cities and crowded communities. One sees white farm-houses on the green sloping sides of Herm; and although Sark, with its dark caverns and lofty perpendicular cliffs which obstruct all views of the interior, seems inhospitable enough, yet one knows that there too are happy homes, all of them homes of comfort, and many of them of high refinement. Such is the mansion of the Seigneur, surrounded by pleasure-gardens, and lawns, and terraces which would be worthy of any nobleman's mansion in England. After a visit to Sark it looks no longer inhospitable, but the pleasantest associations are henceforth connected with it. Whether in sunshine or in storm, or whatever be the weather, these islands are at all times delightful to look upon. So highly do I value them as imparting a rich element of variety and beauty, and, in certain states of the atmosphere, of sublimity as well, to the sea-view from Guernsey, that this alone would make me prefer it to the sister island. Jersey, on the other hand, must be allowed to be the favourite and popular island of the two, as may be gathered from the much greater number of its visitors and residents. The society, therefore, is much more extended: it is a gayer and faster place. "There is more going on," to use a common phrase. But those who like a quieter place, a more bracing climate, and somewhat lower rents will with me give the preference to Guernsey.

Varieties.

THE MATTERHORN.—There are few Alpine peaks now which have not been surmounted by energetic and ambitious climbers. Mont Cervin, or the Matterhorn, was one of the most impracticable, but its summit too has this year been reached, under tragic circumstances too well known. On the 14th of July, Lord Francis Douglas, Mr. Hadow, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Edward Whympier, and three guides, Michael Croz, and the Taugwalders father and son, made the successful ascent. In descending the neck of the crest, Mr. Hadow, a less experienced mountaineer than his companions, lost his footing, and in his fall carried down also Croz, who was first, and Mr. Hudson and Lord F. Douglas, who were following. The rope broke under the fearful strain, and the elder Taugwalder, Whympier, and the younger Taugwalder were saved. Three days later, on the 17th July, four guides, C. A. Carrel, G. Birch, A. Meinert, and A. Gorret, reached the summit from the Italian side from the valley of Tournanche. The expedition was planned by Signor Giordano, of the Italian Alpine Club, but the guides would not allow any traveller to accompany them, on account of the uncertain weather. A record of their ascent was deposited on the summit by the English party, and the Italians planted their national flag on the highest point. Before ascending the Matterhorn, Mr. Whympier had, among other perilous feats, achieved the ascent of the obelisk-like Aiguille Verte, to the amazement of the natives of Chamouni. (For a view of the Matterhorn, see No. 600 of "The Leisure Hour." In No. 562 an account will be found of previous attempts on the Matterhorn, by Mr. E. Whympier.)

PERILOUS CLIMBING.—The Paris correspondent of "The Times" says:—A considerable crowd was collected one evening in July in front of the Church of St. Eustache, to watch the proceedings of a man in a white blouse, who had clambered, by means of the sculptural asperities of the building, to the entablature and cornices which surmount the great lateral door of the church, opposite the market. From this perilous eminence he was haranguing the people and throwing down pieces of money, saying, "Go and fetch me some tobacco." As it was expected that he must lose his footing, mattresses were brought to break his fall; but, on the appearance of some *sergens de ville*, he recommenced his hazardous ascent, and reached a hollow niche, from which, with a prodigious effort, he sprang into the gallery which leads to the towers, where, however, he was soon after secured. From a medical examination it appeared that he had been acting under the influence of mental alienation.

THE LATE QUEEN ADELAIDE.—One of the letters in the "Autographic Mirror" is from Queen Adelaide to the late Duke of Cambridge, then Viceroy of Hanover, touching the death of William IV. "Dearest Sir," writes the Queen, "I really do not know how to thank you sufficiently for your most kind letter, and for all the affectionate expressions you use to me. Believe me, though I may not express well what I feel, yet I do feel, and love you, dear Duke of Cambridge, very, very sincerely. The death of my beloved king has been the greatest sorrow I ever experienced, not excepting even my mother's death—for her sufferings and ill-health had long prepared me for that grief—but he was the most kind and indulgent friend I ever had, and every day and every circumstance endeared him more and more to those who lived with him and could appreciate his excellence. There never was so unselfish a man; he was most patient in pain, and showed a perfectly religious resignation and fortitude at the approach of death; in short, I am sure we shall never again see his like—nor do I wish it—for it is only a source of sorrow to become as attached as one cannot avoid being to such a character."

THE DEAD SEA.—The Rev. H. B. Tristram, the journal of whose scientific travels in Palestine has recently been published ("The Land of Israel," Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), has described the Dead Sea in more lively colours than usual with travellers. He is commenting on a newspaper account of the absence of all life near the lake—a popular error of old date:—"The name of Dead Sea is a modern, or rather mediaeval epithet. To the ancients it was simply the Salt Sea; to the Arabs it is only Lot's Sea (Bahr Lut). During the past year I spent many weeks on the shores of the Dead Sea. I walked round a great portion of it, and examined every nook and cranny of the cliffs which enclose it. The climate is perfect and most delicious. At no place in the world could a

sanatorium be established with such prospects of benefit as at Ain Jidy (Engedi). Baths hot and cold, salt and mineral, with luxurious shade, cascades and purling streams—everything but security for life and property is there. There are many spots near the sea where fresh-water streams flow throughout the year, and where sweet water bubbles up within a few feet of the salt shore. I may mention (besides Ain Jidy) Feskiah, Terabeh, Um Bagkek, Callirhoe, the Arnon, and, above all, the Safieh, at the east side. Wherever these occur there is a prodigality of life, animal and vegetable, to the very shores of the sea. I collected one hundred and eighteen species of birds, several of them new to science, on the shores of the lake, or swimming or flying over its waters. The canebrakes and oases which fringe it are the homes of about forty species of mammals, several of them animals never before brought to England; and innumerable tropical or semi-tropical plants, of Indian or African affinities, perfume the atmosphere. The rich plain of the Safieh is cultivated for indigo, maize, and barley to within a few feet of the water's edge, and the date-palm still waves over the mouth of the Arnon and the Zerka. The bitterness of the water of the lake itself is simply due to the saturation from the great salt mountain of Usdum, at its southern extremity, and to the many hot sulphur springs which stud its shores. This saturation of salt and sulphur soon destroys the fresh-water fish, which enter the sea in shoals, and supply food to the three species of kingfishers, the gulls, ducks, and grebes, which may be seen and shot on all parts of the lake. Let not, therefore, the traveller be deterred from extending his investigations round the Dead Sea shores. He will find abundance of life to repay him if a naturalist, of varied scenery and wondrously painted skies and precipices if he is an artist, and night after night he may pitch his tent by springs of sweet water."

FAST YOUNG LADIES.—In order to be a fast young lady, it is necessary to lay aside all reserve and refinement—everything that savours of womanly weakness; to have no troublesome scruples, but to be ready to accord an appreciating smile to the broadest joke. There must be no feeling of dependence on the stronger sex; but, by adopting, as far as decency permits, masculine attire, masculine habits, and masculine modes of expression, accompanied by a thorough knowledge of slang, and a fluency in using it, these ladies show themselves to be above all narrow-minded prejudices. There must be no thinking about other people's feelings; if people will be thin-skinned, let them keep out of their way at all events. Should "mamma" raise her voice in a feeble remonstrance, the fast young lady impresses upon her that "she is no judge of these matters. In her old school-days, everything and every one were slow; but it is quite changed now." In short, to sum up, to be a fast young lady, modesty, delicacy, refinement, respect for superiors, consideration for the aged, must all be set aside; and boldness, independence, irreverence, brusqueness, and, we fear, too often heartlessness, must take their place.—"*A Voice from the Fireside.*" By Mary Elizabeth Miller. (Aylott and Son.)

POPISH INDULGENCES AND PRIESTLY FORGIVENESS OF SIN.—A gentleman who heard Tetzel preach sent for him, and asked him if he could forgive a sin which he had not yet committed. "Certainly," replied Tetzel. "Well," said the gentleman, "I want to take a slight revenge of one of my enemies. I assure you I do not wish to take his life. I will pay you ten crowns if you in return will give me such a letter of indulgence as will insure my forgiveness." Even Tetzel hesitated, but at last he agreed to give him the letter for thirty crowns. The gentleman went away, and, summoning some of his servants, he took up a position in a wood through which he knew Tetzel would be obliged to pass on his way to Treblin. As soon as the monk came near, he came from his hiding-place, gave him a severe beating, and carried off the great chest in which Tetzel kept all the treasure which he had collected. Tetzel brought an action against the gentleman. Duke George of Saxony was excessively indignant, and was going to punish him very severely; but, when he showed the letter which Tetzel had given him, and which promised him entire forgiveness, the duke had nothing further to say, and the gentleman was acquitted.

JOHN KNOX IN 1572.—I trust to satisfy Morton, and as for John Knox, that thing is done and doing daily. The people are generally well bent to England, abhorring the fact in France, (the St. Bartholomew massacre), and fearing their tyranny. John Knox is now so feeble as scarce he can stand alone, or speak to be heard of any audiences; yet doth he every Sunday cause himself to be carried to a place where a certain number do hear him, and preacheth with the same vehemency and

zeal that ever he did. He doth reverence your lordship much, and willed me once again to send you word that he thanked God he had obtained at his hands that the gospel of Jesus Christ is truly and simply preached through Scotland, which doth so comfort him as now he desireth to be out of this miserable life. He further said that it was not of your lordship's [fault] that he was not a great bishop in England; but the effect grown in Scotland, he being an instrument, doth much more satisfy him. He desired me to make his last commendations most humbly to your lordship, and withal that he prayed God to increase his strong Spirit in you, saying that there never was more need.—*Letter from Killigrew, Queen Elizabeth's Ambassador in Scotland, to Cecil, Lord Burleigh, quoted in Tytler's "History of Scotland."*

ANNUAL OFFERINGS AT THE CRATER OF THE BROMOK.—The offerings generally consisted of cocoa-nuts, plantains, pine-apples, mangoes, and other fruits; baskets of chickens recently fledged; pots, prios, and baskets of rice; trays piled up with a variety of cakes exhaling incongruous smells; strips of calico and silk; coins of silver, gold, and copper; besides numerous other objects. After some minutes spent in prayer, the people going through all the external forms prescribed by their creed, which often constitute the whole extent of their knowledge of it, each priest dipped his goupillon into the basket of water, which he took into his left hand, and, muttering some words, sprinkled the offerings as they were brought to him. All the holy men then bowed down, and repeated a loud prayer, which was echoed by the young ponditas and some of the bystanders. The oldest of the priests next rose up, followed by all the others, repeating words which sounded like "Ayo! Ayo! Bromok!" probably meaning "Forward to the Bromok!" This was the signal anxiously expected. The mass of human beings now made a tremendous rush for the volcano, the first who succeeded in gaining the ridge believing himself favoured by fortune, and certain of future good luck. Some of the old priests would stop every now and then, bid their followers spread the mat, and prostrate themselves in prayer for fully five or ten minutes—a proceeding which struck me as savouring strongly of sham, for no doubt they were fatigued, and made a virtue of necessity. The roaring of the Bromok seemed greater than it was yesterday—a fact most probably attributable to the lightness of the atmosphere. The various families and individuals then handed their offerings to the priests, who again mumbled a few words over them, after which their owners hurled them down the crater, repeating, as they did so, some prayer or wish. Cocoa-nuts produced a faint boom, boom, as they came in contact with the shelving sides, and were lost for ever. Plantains, rice, and cakes were thrown down in baskets, sending back columns of dust as they gradually disappeared. Our hostess threw down a number of coins and several small pieces of muslin.—*W. B. D'Almeida's "Life in Java."*

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.—The piety of Gustavus Adolphus cannot be classed with fanaticism. He made the religious feeling serviceable in promoting all the military virtues, composing prayers himself. His maxim was that a good Christian could not be a bad soldier. He said to an officer, who seemed surprised to find him reading the Bible, "I am seeking strength against temptation by meditating on the sacred volume. Persons of my rank are only answerable to God for their actions, and that independence gives the enemy of our souls opportunity to lay snares, against which we cannot be too much on our guard."—*Colonel Graham's "Military Ends and Moral Means."*

AGES OF A NATION.—In the youth of a state arms do flourish; in the middle age of a state learning, and then both of them together for a time; in the declining age of a state mechanical arts and merchandise.—*Lord Bacon.*

CLOTH MANUFACTURES IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND.—Several congregations of German Protestants, fleeing from Continental persecution, had found an asylum in England. One of the principal of these was settled in London, under the pastoral care of John Alasco, a man of great repute, the friend and patron of Erasmus; while another was placed, by the patriotic wisdom of the Duke of Somerset, the protector during the king's minority, at Glastonbury, upon the lands of the famous monastery then recently dissolved. Here they introduced their peculiar craft. They were cloth-workers, and from them the kingdom derived one of its greatest manufactures; and the western counties of England, after three centuries, acknowledge with gratitude that the boundless fields of enterprise and wealth they still cultivate were first pointed out by a persecuted band of Flemish refugees.—*Marsden's "History of the Puritans."*

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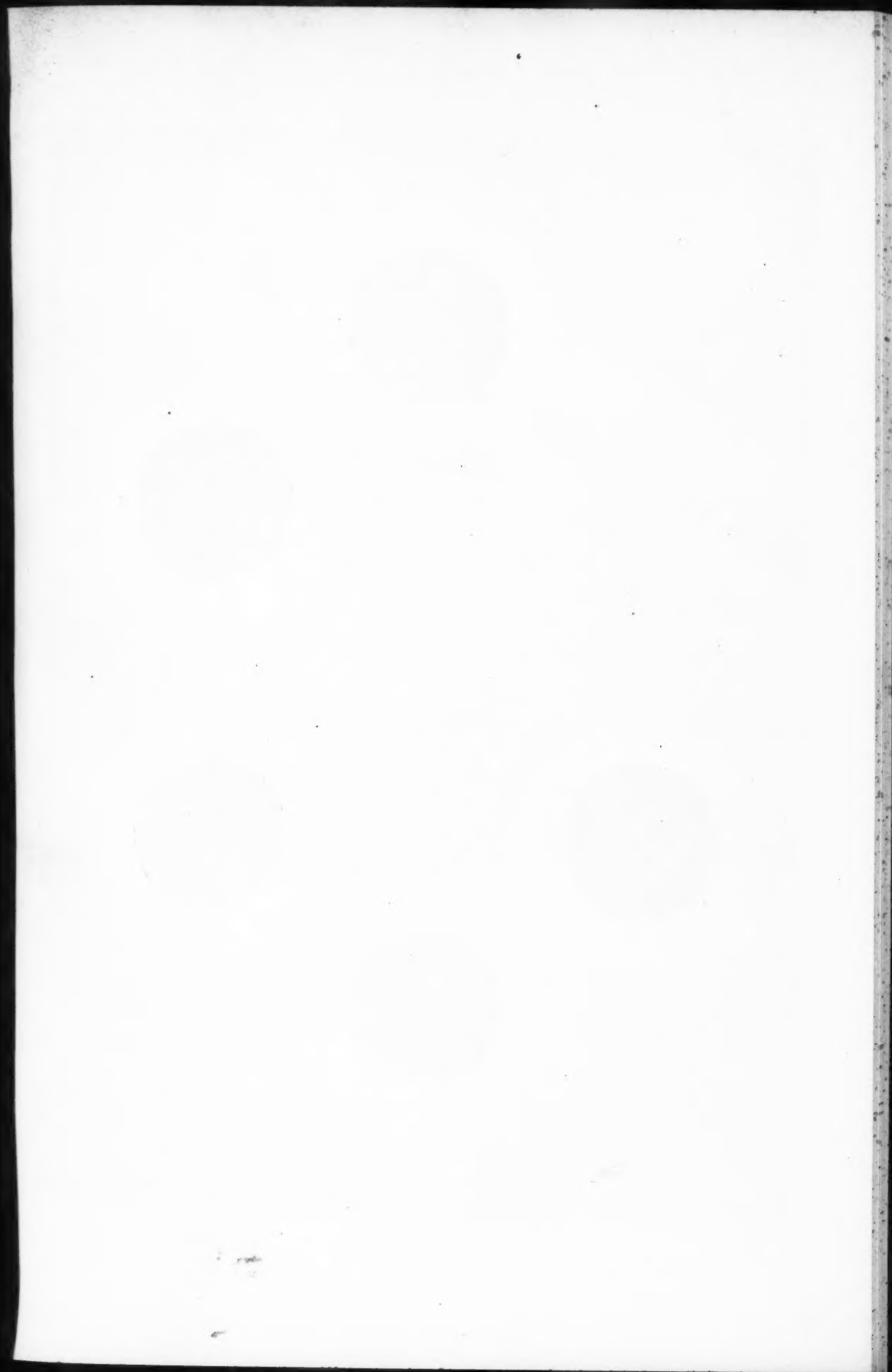
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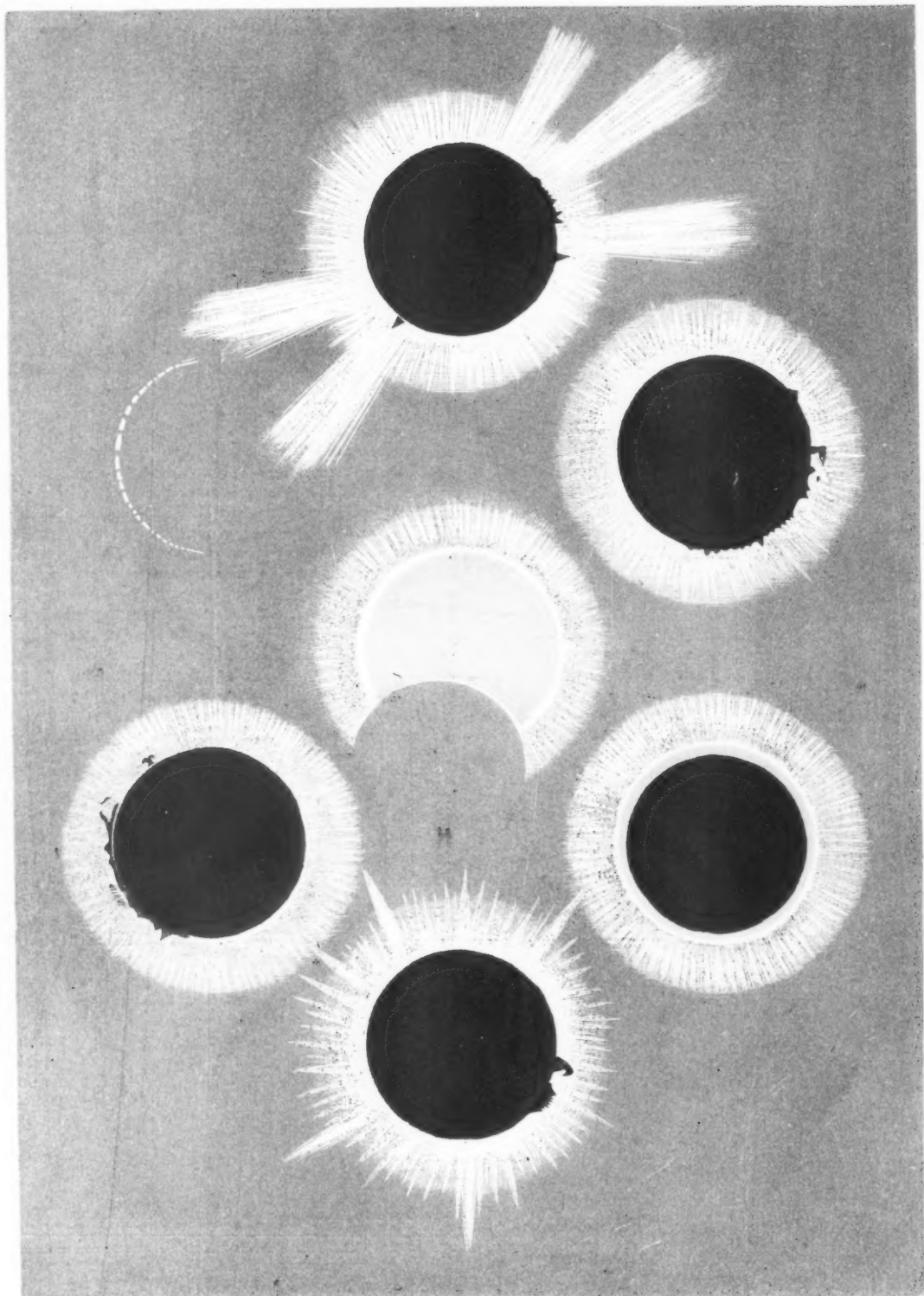
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